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UNCLAS ANKARA 003481

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KSAC](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: ANKARA OSAC DISCUSSES SOFT TARGET VULNERABILITY

REF: A. ANKARA 3396

[1](#)B. STATE 133022

[1](#)1. RSO, CONS and FCS hosted a reconstituted OSAC Country Council on 5/27/03 to discuss the critical nature of the global terrorist threat and the focus on "soft" targets. RSO provided an overview of the historical terrorist threat in Turkey, the worldwide threat from Al-Qa'ida and its network of terrorist organizations, and host country efforts to combat terrorism in Turkey. RSO, CONS and FCS briefed the group on the outreach programs offered by the Embassy and the avenues available to pass/share security information to the official and private sector American citizens in Turkey. RSO and CONS then reiterated the security preparedness information that has been passed through a series of warden messages on the potential for terrorist acts focused on "soft" targets and the need to practice good security habits at home and office, when traveling, visiting tourist destinations, etc. In light of the recent Al-Qa'ida attacks, and the ongoing spate of leftist terrorist bombings in Turkey, both official and non-official Americans must maintain vigilance in any location that could be considered a soft target.

[1](#)2. The Country Council was appreciative of the overview of both the worldwide and Turkey-specific terrorist threat analysis. The members present felt comfortable with their profile in the current security climate in Turkey; no members voiced concern over their individual security posture. The council discussed the merits of clustering versus dispersing residential housing. The clustered option counters the historical pattern of assassination attacks by Dev Sol (now DHKP/C) in Turkey, while dispersed housing lessens the damage that could be inflicted from a VBIED, the preferred Al-Qa'ida attack scenario. While an individual decision, there are obvious drawbacks to either option in Turkey. The Council discussed and voiced their unanimous approval of the USG "No Double Standard" policy regarding threat dissemination and security notices. The consensus was that members would prefer more, rather than less, regarding security notices. RSO will maintain a distribution list of Country Council members as parallel means (with Consular Warden System) of communicating with Americans living and working in Turkey, and with representatives of US-affiliated businesses.

[1](#)3. This initial meeting of a reconstituted Country Council was well received by all participants and Country Council meetings will be held on a quarterly basis. The Country Council was especially enthused to be included in another information loop, whereby the Embassy can communicate with our private sector constituents on security matters of mutual interest. RSO expects membership to swell by the next scheduled meeting in September.

PEARSON